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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Special Crops Newsletter

Issue 8 July, 1999

Special Crops Product Team

The Special Crops Product Team represents a cross-section of specialists from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. It is a liaison between industry and government. The Team's mission is to lead departmental activities in Special Crops, consistent with industry objectives, in response to diversification, value-added and market place opportunities.

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Special Crops Websites

Alberta Agriculture
Special Crops Product Team Newsletter - Current and back issues of this quarterly newsletter.
http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/crops/special/scnews/index.html

Special Crops Links - Links to agronomic, production and other information on special crops.
http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/navigation/crops/special/index.html

General Store:

Feed peas for sale/wanted - Database of current sellers and buyers of feed peas. A general special crops section will be added to the General Store in the near future.
http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca./store/peas.html

Market Commentaries
Alberta Special Crops Weekly Market Commentary - Weekly Alberta market commentary for feed peas, lentils, mustard, and canary seed.
http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/economic/outlook/wkmktcom.html

Agriculture and Agrifood Canada Bi-weekly Market Commentary - Bi-weekly market commentary from Agriculture Canada.
http://aceis.agr.ca/policy/winn/biweekly/English/framee.htm

Manitoba Agriculture News and Forecasts - Crop reports, markets and production forecasts from Manitoba Agriculture.
http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/news/index.html

Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food - Various information from Saskatchewan Agriculture including crop reports and market trends.
http://www.agr.gov.sk.ca/

Market Commentary from the USDA - Market commentary from the United States Department of Agriculture. This report includes comments on dry beans, peas and lentils.
http://www.ams.usda.gov.marketnews.htm

Stat Publishing web site - Pricing information on lentils, peas, mustard, dry beans, fababeans, and chickpeas.
http://fbminet.ca/bulletin/fbmbulse8.htm

Exporting and International Markets
ATS: The Agri-Food Trade Service - Provides international trade and market information for Canadian agri-food exporters.
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
http://atn-riae.agr.ca

Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) - Site provides a variety of information on international business, travel, etc.
http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca

InfoExport - The international trade web site of DFAIT.
http://www.infoexport.gc.ca

ExportSource - "Team Canada" site offering information on foreign markets, trade statistics, export financing, trade shows, export missions and sources of assistance.
http://exportsource.gc.ca

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Contains information on U.S. agricultural marketing, regulations and statistics.
http://www.usda.gov

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service - Country market reports, trade statistics, and trade policy information.
http://www.fas.usda.gov

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations - Statistical databases including country-specific information.
http://apps.fao.org/

PACIFIC Exchange Rate Service - Current and historical foreign exchange information.
http://pacific.commerce.ubc.ca/xr/

Miscellaneous
Online farm community brings the latest in farm business management trends right to your farm. The Agri-ville community is over 1,890 registered members strong!
http://www.agri-ville.com

Tell your story about market prices and acres planted of buck
http://agri-ville.com/members/special-crops.html

Discover how to capture market share in Developing New Markets Meeting Room.
http://agri-ville.com/members/new-markets.html

Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration
http://www.agr.ca/pfra/pfintroe.htm

Site and links provide information on applied research and demonstration of various special crops under irrigation.

Canadian Organic Advisory Board - Check the status of Canada's new national organic standards and read about the market potential for organic foods.
http://www.coab.ca

Alberta Pulse Growers Commission - This site contains production and market information and links for pulse crops.
http://www.pulse.ab.ca/

Pulse Canada - The homepage of Canada's national industry organization of pulse growers and marketers.
http://www.pulsecanada.com

Health Canada - Information provided on regulation, licensing and research of health products, supplements, etc. and has also info on regulated products such as industrial hemp.
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca

Food Biotechnology Communication Network - A useful site for balanced, science-based facts about food biotechnology.
http://www.foodbiotech.org

"ACEIS" - Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada - Site includes information on agricultural news, policies, regulations, federal agri-food programs, trade commodity prices, agri-science and technology, officials and expertise.
http://www.agr.ca

Canadian Herb Society
http://www.herbsociety.ca/

As links change rapidly and new sites appear frequently on the web, we will update this list in future editions of the Special Crops Newsletter. If you have any links that you think would be of interest to the Special Crops Industry in Alberta, please e-mail them to: doug.mcmullen@agric.gov.ab.ca

New National "Jefferson Initiative on Crop Diversification" in United States

While attending the "New Crops, New Uses" conference in Phoenix, AZ I learned about the announcement of the Thomas Jefferson Initiative, which was recently approved by the Congress of the United States. Although no money has yet been appropriated, the Initiative was the only one of approximately 400 proposals that was approved through a special legislative process. The overall goal is to fund the

development of new crops in the United States at a level of US$15-20 million annually.

The Thomas Jefferson Initiative for Crop Diversification is being developed as a U.S. national research and education program that will take a comprehensive, coordinated approach to diversifying cropping systems. The Initiative is intended to involve a variety of public- and private-sector partners in overcoming the barriers that exist to new crop development and commercialization. When writing about his own services to his country, Thomas Jefferson wrote that "The greatest service which can be rendered any country is to add a useful plant to its [agri]culture". Jefferson was a strong advocate of testing new crops and incorporating them into crop rotations. The Initiative is named after Jefferson to honor his efforts to diversify and strengthen agriculture in America.

The congressionally authorized Jefferson Initiative has three primary components. The legislation authorizes USDA, through the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), to provide funding for regional centers, for a national coordinating center, and for competitive grants. The regional centers are intended to be based at land grant universities, or institutions working in partnership with a land grant. The goal for each regional center is to do work on breeding, production, and marketing of the crops best adapted to the multi-state region served by the center. Congress specified that a non-profit corporation be used as the organizational structure for the national coordinating center. The national center is expected to support the regional centers with additional research and education programs, including production and utilization research, and national marketing programs. A particular role of the national center is to help provide information during development of appropriate federal guidelines for new crops in areas such as crop insurance and grain grading standards. The competitive grants program is expected to provide a mechanism for involving partners from every part of the country in helping develop appropriate new crop options for farmer adoption.

The organizers of this Initiative are currently working with Congress to get an appropriation within the next six months. They are working with legislators from several states to get $US 6-10 million. The group involved in developing the Initiative noted recently that they have had increased support from several regions of the United States for crop diversification, due to the low market prices available for conventional crops.

Crop diversification in the United States is getting ready for a major funding boost. We have seen large pools of resources dedicated to diversification in Australia and Europe in the past three years. Canadians are going to have to work hard to be able to keep up with other competing agricultural nations who are also recognizing the advantages of research in this area of huge potential returns.

Stan Blade, Ph.D., P. Ag.
Leader, New Crop Development Unit

Special Crops Conference Proceedings

The proceedings from the Special Crops Conference held in Edmonton from November 1 to 3, 1998, have been sent to registered participants. Includes copies of presentations on herbs and medicinal plants, pulse crops, canaryseed, essential oil content of prairie grown spices (coriander and caraway), buckwheat production, wildcrafting, the Alberta potato industry, dry bean production, fenugreek and hemp. The report also includes presentations made by AAFRD staff on the variety of programs available to assist producers and manufacturers. Call AAFRD at 1-800-292-5697 for a copy.

Alberta Special Crops Exports

The following tables show Alberta's special crops exports for 1998. For items with more than five export markets, only the top five markets are listed as are total exports.

1998 Alberta Special Crops Exports - Pulses
(Source: Statistics Canada)

Country	Tonnes	$,000
Peas		
Spain	92,292	16,430
Cuba	26,580	9,162
India	26,240	6,487
Bangladesh	14,387	4,662
Japan	6,639	3,280
Total	248,267	63,681

Dried Beans, not elsewhere specified		
U.S.	6,847	4,656
Haiti	1,743	1,281
Dominican Republic	1,045	844
Algeria	960	779
Spain	405	344
Total	12,378	9,152

Beans, small red (Adzuki) etc.		
Colombia	2,363	2,206
Costa Rica	1,442	1,240
U.S.	936	601
Brazil	640	485
Japan	20	11
Total	5,400	4,543

Chickpeas		
U.S.	68	123
Netherlands	21	19
Total	89	142

Peas, frozen		
U.S.	49	27
Poland	43	12
Costa Rica	10	6
Total	92	45
Lentils		
Algeria	949	505
Spain	513	292
Colombia	637	261
Italy	349	214
Germany	275	171
Total	7,392	4,008

Mung, black or green beans		
U.S.	1,954	1,819
Total	1,954	1,819

Kidney and white pea beans		
Brazil	853	638
Venezuela	170	146
U.S.	60	74
Colombia	107	36
Total	1,263	964

Fababeans		
U.S.	182	86
Lebanon	27	13
Saudi Arabia	29	11
Sweden	3	2
Colombia	6	1
Total	247	113

Peas, fresh or chilled		
U.S.	28	19
Uruguay	24	11
Total	52	30

1998 Alberta Special Crops Exports - Other Special Crops

(Source: Statistics Canada)

Country	Tonnes	$,000
Mustard Seed		
U.S.	16,006	8,678
Belgium	5,427	3,028
Japan	3,765	2,180
Germany	285	424
Denmark	115	167
Total	26,215	15,074
Canary Seed		
Belgium	3,866	1,494
U.S.	382	173
Brazil	192	119
Mexico	147	65
Chile	21	11
Total	4,609	1,863

Sunflower Seeds		
Japan	225	96
U.S.	28	43
Mexico	50	37
Total	303	176

Safflower Seeds		
U.S.	248	212
Total	248	212

Sunflower seed or safflower oil, crude		
U.S.	23	31
Taiwan	13	23
Total	35	54

Mustard flour, meal & prepared mustard		
U.S.	1,712	2,505
Germany	420	658
Japan	205	432
Denmark	230	325
Belgium	182	306
Total	3,035	4,714

Mustard seed oil, crude		
U.S.	9	13
Total	9	13

Ginseng Roots		
U.S.	1	420
Total	1	420

Caraway		
U.S.	249	274
Total	249	274
Coriander		
U.S.	45	76
Total	45	76

Spices, not elsewhere specified		
Japan	72	143
U.S.	2	4
Total	73	147

Proposed Special Crops Insurance Plan Regulation Published for Public Response

WINNIPEG, June 1, 1999--Draft regulations pertaining to the Canadian Grain Commission's (CGC) special crops insurance plan were published in the Canada Gazette, May 29. This marks the beginning of a 30-day period during which the public is invited to comment on them.

The draft regulations and related information are available from the CGC by phoning 1-800-853-6705, or from the CGC's Internet web site, www.cgc.ca.

Following the public comment period, a committee of the federal Cabinet will review the regulations, taking into account comments received from the public. If the proposed regulations are approved Cabinet will issue an order in council specifying a date the program will commence. The implementation date currently proposed is August 1, 1999.

Last year, Bill C-26 was passed by Parliament, authorizing a special crops insurance plan for producers of special crops in western Canada. The approval of regulations is the next step in the development of the program.

This plan will insure grain producers against nonpayment for special crops deliveries by companies licensed by the CGC. To pay for this protection, a premium of $0.38/$100.00 of product will be deducted from the price paid for the grain. While the premium will be collected on each delivery, producers who choose to opt out of the program will automatically receive a refund in full on, at least, an annual basis.

Once the program starts, licensed special crops buyers will no longer be obliged to post security for their liabilities to special crops producers. This will facilitate the licensing of buyers and will increase delivery options available to producers.

The grains proposed to be initially designated as special crops are beans, buckwheat, peas, corn, fababeans, lentils, mustard seed, safflower seed, soybeans, sunflower seed and triticale. Not included in the plan are wheat, oats, barley, rye, canola, and flaxseed; these grains will continue to be covered by security posted by CGC licensees.

The Canadian Grain Commission is the federal agency responsible for establishing and maintaining Canada's grain quality standards. Its programs result in shipments of grain that consistently meet contract specifications for quality, safety and quantity. The CGC regulates the grain industry to protect producers' rights and ensure the integrity of grain transactions.

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Agri-Food Trade Services (ATS)

The ATS provides market information and intelligence to Canadian agri-food companies. This includes general assessments of market opportunities, reports by product by country, export statistics, and periodic newsletters produced by the posts abroad on current trends. **FaxBack** and **ATS On-line** help you access the market information you need.

FaxBack

The FaxBack service is a listing of recently released market information available through the ATS. The reference list is faxed to companies that are currently exporting or export interested. The reports listed on FaxBack can be requested now, or at any time in the future, so keep your FaxBack lists for future reference. Some documents are available electronically by e-mail, or can be retrieved from ATS On-line. Otherwise, hard copies of the documents will be sent to you by post.

For more information contact: Bev Uibel, FaxBack Coordinator, Tel: (780) 495-7383 or e-mail: uibelb@em.agr.ca If you do not see the market information you need referenced on FaxBack, contact: Lorrie McFadden, ATS Coordinator at Tel: (780) 495-2119 or e-mail: mcfaddenl@em.agr.ca - additional market information may be available.

ATS On-line, http://atn-riae.agr.ca

This internet site also includes:

- International market reports,
- Worldwide trade events,
- "How to Export" advice, and
- Trade contacts within Canada and abroad.

Market Commentary for the Special Crops

Lets start with field peas. At the beginning of April, yellow peas were $4.00 per bushel and green peas were $3.65. By the end of June, yellow peas were up a dollar at $5.00 whereas green peas were only up a dime at $3.70 per bushel. Yellow peas reached a high at $5.33 at the end of May and greens were $4.10 per bushel that same week. The upward movement in the market has mostly been attributed to increased buying from India because of production shortfalls and a favorable Canada-US exchange rate.

Feed pea prices could rally if a proposed complete European Union ban on both meat and bone meal usage in animal feed formulations is accepted. The French agriculture minister proposed this after the discovery of dioxin contaminated feed derived from animal by-products in Belgium. France alone consumes about 700,000 tonnes of animal by-product meals as protein supplements each year. China, Hong Kong, South Africa, Russia, and Malaysia among other countries have suspended feed imports from some EU countries.

The new feed pea futures contract at the Winnipeg Commodity Exchange (WCE) opened on April 5th. Trading on the new peas contract has been light and there has been some concern expressed about lack of liquidity. The WCE reported that the daily trading volume has averaged over 40 contracts. The June contract opened bidding at $126 per tonne and closed at $144. The August contract ended trading on June 18th at $129 per tonne. October, December, and February contracts closed on June 18, 1999 at $132.00.

Eston lentil prices haven't changed significantly in the past three months. The price for No.1 Estons were 22 cents per pound on April 2nd and on June 18th bidding was at 21 cents. However, No.1 Lairds increased from 15.5 cents per pound on April 2nd to 20 cents on June 18th. Laird prices were pushed up by strong demand coming from India attributed to lower yields in traditional export markets in the Middle East.

The mustard market hasn't changed much in the past three months. At the beginning of April yellows, orientals, and browns were trading around 15 cents per pound and on June 18th No.1 oriental and yellow mustards were bidding at 15 cents per pound and brown mustard at one cent less.

Canary seeded is up one cent from three months ago at 11 cents per pound. Canary seed prices are not expected to improve because of higher carryover stock.

Chickpeas is making headway in Alberta this year. Bid prices are quoted at 24 cents per pound for the old kabuli crop and 24.5 cents per pound for the new crop. For the desi chickpea variety, bid price is at 15 cents per pound. In 1998, area under chickpeas in Alberta was around 4,000 acres. It is projected to more than quadruple in 1999.

Agricore's estimated and actual dry bean pooled prices for 1998 and 1997 are as follows:

Dry Beans	1998 Estimated price	1997 Actual price
Pinto	$25.50/cwt	$26.50/cwt
Pink	$28.00/cwt	$29.50/cwt
Great Northern	$31.00/cwt	$26.75/cwt
Small Reds	$26.00/cwt	$29.00/cwt
Blacks	$26.00/cwt	$25.00/cwt

Every week market information on special crops is posted on Ropin' the Web @
http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/economic/outlook/wkmktcom.html

Forage seed prices and market commentary are posted each month on Ropin' the Web @
http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/economic/stats/forage_prices.html

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Economic Research and Logistics Branch

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Upcoming Event

CDC North Field Day

July 27, 1999

New crop (pulses, hemp, medicinals), vegetable, fruit, greenhouse and seed potato field tours. Everyone must pre-register! Please contact Dr. Stan Blade, Director at (780) 422-1789 for registration or further information.

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